



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW CORONER'S COURT IS NUMBER ONE IN AUSTRALIA

The Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, today congratulated the Coroner's Court of NSW on increasing its case clearance rate and achieving the lowest backlog of any coronial jurisdiction in Australia.

"Resolving coronial matters expeditiously reduces uncertainty and stress for grieving families and can help them to come to terms with the loss of a loved one," Mr Smith said.

The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2012 found the clearance rate of the Coroner's Court had risen from 97 per cent to almost 109 per cent in the 12 months to June 2011.

"A clearance rate of more than 100 per cent indicates the Coroner's Court is finalising new cases efficiently and completing outstanding cases from previous years," Mr Smith said.

"In the space of a year, the Coroner's Court of NSW has gone from having the nation's second worst clearance rate to having the second best clearance rate – and the lowest backlog."

Mr Smith said the results indicated the Coroner's Court had adjusted well to the new Coroner's Act, which came into force at the beginning of 2010.

"The Coroner's Act requires magistrates to deal with all cases reported to the coroner, whereas previously there was scope for the matters to be determined by a court registrar," Mr Smith said.

"It is clear that the Coroner's Court in NSW is now managing its caseload more efficiently. The new Act prevents natural deaths from being unnecessarily reported to coroners, which enables them to focus more on deaths that are suspicious or unexplained."

According to the Report on Government Services, the Local and Children's Courts of NSW continue to lead the nation in the timely finalisation of criminal matters.

The NSW District Court has the second lowest backlog of criminal non-appeal cases older than 12 months, while the NSW Supreme Court's backlog of such cases is at its lowest level in four years.